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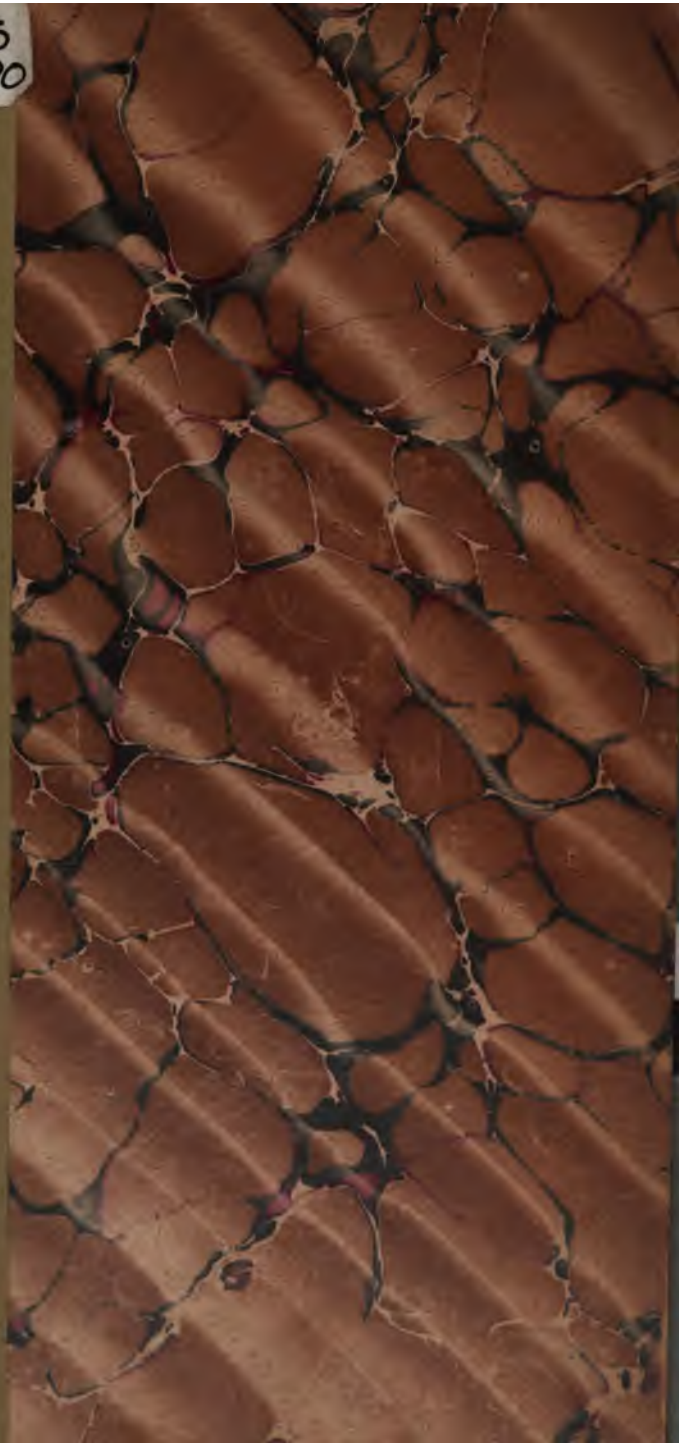
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**Memoir of Purchase Monthly Meeting
concerning Abigail Mott - 1852**

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MEMOIR

OF

PURCHASE MONTHLY MEETING,

CONTAINING

ABIGAIL MOTT.

NEW-YORK:

JAMES H. GORRILL, PRINTER, 274 FLEET- & NASSAU STS.
(SUCCESSOR TO W. BATES PRINTER.)

1855.

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MEMOIR .

Of Purchase Monthly Meeting concerning ABIGAIL MOTT,
deceased.

Our beloved friend Abigail Mott having recently been removed from us by death, we feel engaged to preserve a brief Memoir concerning her, both from the regard we had for her as a distinguished member of our Religious Society, and as a bright example of the efficacy of Divine Grace, when admitted as a governing principle into the heart, to regulate and elevate the character, to qualify for the performance of the varied duties of life, and to sustain under the trials and afflictions incident to it.

She was the daughter of Uriah and Mary Field, and was born in the year 1766. Her parents were worthy members of the Religious Society of Friends, belonging to Purchase Monthly Meeting, in West Chester County, New York; and of this Monthly Meeting Abigail Mott continued to be a member to the close of her life.

In her childhood she was remarkable for the sweetness of her disposition and her orderly deportment, and at this early age was disposed to counsel and encourage her brothers and sisters in a dutiful course of conduct.

Her parents were concerned to train up their children in a manner consistent with the principles of the Religious Society of which they were members, and through their pious care, joined to a tender susceptibility of mind on her part, she was preserved from those deviations from Christian simplicity in appearance and deportment, which too frequently mark the youthful period of life.

She labored under peculiar disadvantages in obtaining a competent portion of school learning, in consequence of the low state of schools at that time, yet such was her fondness for intellectual improvement, that through untiring application, this difficulty was overcome, and she made a progress in literature that prepared her for usefulness in Religious Society, and in the community.

At an early age she was united in marriage with our beloved friend Richard Mott, and being happily united with each other in a religious concern to "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," the union proved a mutual blessing through the varied stages of their future life; and in their experience was verified the promise of our blessed Redeemer to those who make the performance of their religious duties their first and chief concern, "All things necessary shall be added unto you."

Impressed with the weight of responsibility connected with the sphere in life which she had now assumed, she entered upon it with a desire faithfully and discreetly to perform the duties connected with her new position. Sensible of the advantage to be gained by the observance of method and order in the

business and arrangements of the family, she was enabled to introduce a system of management by which the benefit in view was secured, and which procured for her household the enjoyment of quiet and comfort.

Through the force of the "Law of kindness" she obtained an influence over those within the province of her control so fully, as to render unnecessary the harsher features of authority. While by this means she gained the heart-felt respect of those around her, and also a faithful attention from them to their respective duties—reciprocal attachment contributed largely to the prevalence of domestic peace. This "Law of kindness" united with her humble piety, endeared her to all who were acquainted with her.

So fully was she satisfied with the benefit resulting from the system of management she had adopted, that in later life she was induced to labor as an author to draw attention to the advantages to be derived from such a course.

By an early submission to the discipline of the Spirit of Christ, she became a very valuable member of our Society, "Adorning the doctrine" by her circumspect life.

About the twenty-eighth year of her age she was appointed to the station of an Elder, and through the remainder of her life was enabled to discharge the duties of this office to the satisfaction of her friends—an Elder worthy of double honor, because she filled the station and performed its duties in the fear of the Lord.

The public labors of her husband in the ministry

commenced about the same time ; and he frequently feeling constrained to leave his home and its many attractions, to travel in the service of the Gospel—while she sympathised with him in the exercise, she uniformly resigned him willingly to the service, encouraging him in a faithful attention to his duty, and cheerfully taking upon herself the charge that devolved on her during his absence.

She entertained a lively sympathy for those who were called to the work of the ministry, and willingly received and entertained them when travelling in this service. To such her home proved a quiet resting place. While attentively administering to their temporal wants, she was qualified to enter into feeling with them in their spiritual trials and exercises, and to hand forth the counsel or encouragement that they needed—thus performing the duties of a mother in the Church.

Firmly attached to the doctrines of the Gospel as held by the Religious Society of which she was a member, she felt deeply interested in the preservation of a sound and pure ministry. Hence every appearance of a departure from soundness of doctrine was regarded by her with much solicitude. Her concern on account of the Ministry, and her views respecting it, are expressed in the following extract from a paper written by her, dated Fifth month 1831 :

“I think there is cause to apprehend that the Ministry in our Society, notwithstanding the sifting we have experienced, is yet too superficial—that in some instances there is a want of that deep indwelling that mortal man should witness, to bring him into a

suitable state to visit the immortal seed and word of life, in the hearts of his hearers. And this being too often the case when attempts are made to instruct the people, the matter communicated, coming only from the superficial part in the speaker, cannot penetrate the heart and produce conviction in the mind of the hearer.

“The ministry of the Word in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, is a very solemn office, and the rightly qualified are often induced to adopt the query, ‘who is sufficient for these things?’ But when they feel the ‘wo’ alluded to by the Apostle, and are attentive to the word given, an evidence attends, and the word preached generally meets the witness for truth in the hearts of the audience, and while the sincere are comforted, the weak strengthened, the lukewarm aroused, even the gain-sayer is brought to a secret acknowledgment of the excellency of the Christian’s hope. It ought therefore to be the prayer of all the truly exercised amongst us, that the ministry may be purged, not only from its *dross*, and its *tin*, but from its reprobate silver also.

“Until this is experienced, and the people are made willing, instead of depending on the minister, to *dig* and to *beg* for the arising of that life in themselves which will enable them to worship in reverential fear before Him who is the true Head of the Church, and to cast away all dependance upon man, whose breath is in his nostrils, we cannot reasonably look for much increase of vital religion within our limits or for much enlargement of our borders. The foundation of Christianity must be sought for, and built

upon in its own simplicity, or the superstructure raised, will not stand."

As a wife she was very affectionate and discreet : calm and deliberate in her disposition, she was prepared to meet the various contingencies of life with composure, and, possessing a sound judgment, she was qualified to aid her husband in seasons of trial, by her prudent counsel, and to comfort him by her sympathy.

As a Mother, she was much impressed with the importance of her charge, and was concerned to seek for ability rightly to train the infant minds committed to her care. Sensible how much the opening faculties of the child, require the mother's care to give them the right direction, and to furnish the expanding mind with ideas suited to its age and strength, she carefully sought for opportunities thus to guide and nurse the growing intellect.

The twilight of the evening was a favorite season with her, for collecting her little ones around her, to enter into free and cheerful conversation with them, on subjects suited to their capacity, and calculated while enlivening their feelings to enlarge their sphere of useful knowledge—watching on these occasions, to draw from the subject some moral that might aid in forming the character, or to catch a thought that might lead to the contemplation of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of their Creator, and of the obligation resting upon us all, to be grateful to Him for his multiplied favors, and to love and serve Him according to His will.

Instruction thus given, scarcely could fail to produce

salutary effects. So fully was she satisfied with the benefit resulting from care thus extended, that she believed it right to invite the attention of parents (mothers especially) to the subject, in several essays prepared and published by her.

By an unusual dispensation of Divine Providence, she was called to endure severe trials of a domestic nature, being bereaved of all their children (four in number) by sickness and death, at different periods—two of them when only a few years old—a third, an only daughter, at an interesting age, just entering upon the stage of womanhood. Their remaining son attained to mature age, leaving at his decease a wife and infant son.

Being affectionately attached to her children, she felt these bereavements keenly ; yet regarding them as a dispensation of her Heavenly Father, she submitted with exemplary resignation. It had been her concern to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;” and in their early removal from this probationary state of being, she was comforted in the belief, that through Divine Mercy, they were admitted into those eternal joys which are prepared for the righteous. In resigning these *plants* which she had nursed with the tenderest maternal care, she was enabled to adopt the language, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

She entertained a lively sympathy with the suffering class of her fellow creatures, from whatever cause those sufferings might arise. Hence she was very attentive in endeavoring to administer to the relief of

the sick, who were within her reach. Those who were struggling with scanty means of subsistence, as well as the more abject poor, found in her a steady friend; and her hands were often employed in preparing articles of clothing for the destitute. Many mementos of her generous regard for this class of persons, like "the coats and garments which Dorcas had made," bear testimony to the kindness of her heart.

She felt tenderly for that oppressed portion of the human family, whose rights as men are torn from them, and they doomed to a state of bondage that is to be transmitted from parents to their children, with the disheartening prospect ever present, that "on the side of their oppressors there is power—but they have no comforters." To her it was a pleasing anticipation, to look forward in hope to the time when, through the humanizing influence of the Christian religion, those having the power should be induced to restore to this injured people, the full enjoyment of that liberty which is the inalienable gift of our common Creator.

The depressed condition of the people of color in the "Free States" likewise attracted her attention and her commiseration. From a desire to promote their improvement, she wrote and published "Sketches" of the characters of those of their own people who had most distinguished themselves, with the hope of exciting a spirit of emulation by such examples, that might tend to the elevation of their character. This work was favorably received, and has been extensively circulated.

Sensible of the duty of maintaining a watch over our words as well as conduct, her circumspection on these accounts was such, that rarely, if ever, was an expression, or an act indulged, that could cause uneasiness to another. She was fond of the company of her friends, and her social intercourse with them was free and interesting, often edifying. By her affability and sweetness of disposition, a numerous circle of young persons were warmly attached to her. She took pleasure in mingling with them, and was careful to embrace these opportunities to impart instruction and counsel to them.

She was through life diligent in the attendance of religious meetings, when the state of her health would admit of it, and her appearance and deportment on these occasions were such as to bespeak a mind intent on heavenly things. In meetings for discipline, she was particularly serviceable. Sensible of the importance of faithfully maintaining our christian discipline, she was concerned not only to encourage others in the exercise of this care, but willingly united with her friends in the labor.

For many years she filled the office of Overseer. Her mild and conciliating manner qualified her for this service, and obtained for her a ready ear, from those who were the objects of her concern, to receive the counsel she felt engaged to impart.

She highly prized the Scriptures of Truth, as proceeding from "holy men of God," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and as being "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Enter-

taining this view, she was concerned to promote the daily reading of them in her family, and to encourage others in this practice. In the later years of her life, when her hearing had become impaired, it was very interesting to see her at the stated time, seated by the side of her husband, or other person who read, seriously and intently tracing the page with her eye as the reader proceeded.

In the summer of 1847, with her husband she made a visit to her daughter-in-law and grand son, then residing in Burlington, New Jersey ; designing to spend a few months with them, and return. Bodily infirmities had been gaining upon her for several years, and at this period experiencing an increase of debility, and feeling the need of the sympathy, and the kind and watchful attention of her children, she was induced to prolong her stay, and eventually closed her days with them.

To this time we have spoken of the subject of this Memoir, as residing within our own limits, and coming under our own observation. During the few remaining years of her life, her daughter above referred to has furnished the following testimony concerning her.

While residing here, the same mild and Christian virtues exerted their influence over the domestic circle ; and very striking and instructive was it, to observe the constant cheerfulness of spirit with which she submitted to the privations which her increasing bodily weakness subjected her to. Early rising was with her a principle as well as a practice, and when she came from her chamber, into the family band, she brought with her a sunshine of peace and serenity,

which seemed to diffuse itself on all around her. Separated as she was from her early friends, and from her own particular meeting, her loving spirit attached itself to those objects that were within her reach; and she felt bound to attend meetings both for worship and discipline, as long as she was able to do so. Her example and influence attracted those around her, and attached them to her in a remarkable manner. Not only those of the same standing in age and experience, but many young persons sought her society, deriving both pleasure and profit from it. For the poor and needy around her, wherever her lot was cast, her sympathies were called into action; and her hands were often employed in preparing such articles of clothing for their comfort, as lay within her power. These labors of love evidently brought a sweet reward of peace to her mind.

In Ninth month 1849, she was seized with paralysis from which her recovery appeared doubtful. The power of articulation was for a short time suspended, but her mind under this shock appeared composed and unimpaired. On regaining the use of speech she said, "The will of the Lord be done;" and this state of confiding submission to the will of her Heavenly Father, was manifested throughout this afflicting dispensation. Observing her husband to be affected, with much tenderness she said to him, "A happy union such as ours has been, cannot be severed without a pang." Many other instructive and comforting expressions were uttered by her, evincing the strength and clearness of her faith and hope—illustrative of the truth of the declaration, "Thou wilt keep him in

perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

Recovering from this illness, she nearly regained her previous state of health, manifesting the same clearness and strength of mind that had marked her course through life; and was able frequently to attend religious meetings, in which she took great delight. On the 9th of Seventh month 1851, while seated beside her daughter—to whom she was tenderly attached—with her sewing work in her hand, and apparently as well as usual, a second severe shock of paralysis occurred, by which her whole left side, including that eye, was entirely disabled, and so continued while she lived. The use of speech was lost for some time—her consciousness, not entirely.

The following particulars respecting this illness, and the close of her life, are taken from notes preserved at the time.

Her husband was from home at the time of this attack, attending the Monthly Meeting of which he was a member. His return was hastened by a message informing him of her illness. On his entering her room, she was able to receive and greet him with her usual affection, saying with a sweetness that seemed almost heavenly, "Welcome, always welcome, even from our youth."

Hopes were for a time entertained, that the disease might so far yield, as to admit of her being again about, still a little longer to cheer the family circle by her delightful society. But it soon became evident that the disease was progressing with a steady pace. With true Christian fortitude, and entire resignation to

the Divine Will, she submitted without a murmur to the afflictive dispensation ; nor did she during its continuance, at any time express a desire that it should be otherwise. Her trust for support was in her Saviour, whom she had long loved, and she loved him to the end. Her faith was unwavering in the salvation that cometh by Jesus Christ.

Such was the pressure of the disease, while her physical powers were becoming a wreck, that it was feared the mind would also give way ; but it was wonderful, (and we record it with gratitude to our Heavenly Father,) that throughout this sore disease of five weeks' continuance, her recollection remained clear ; and such an extensive range of thought, such an interest in passing events, such warm affection for her friends, such solicitude for the progress of vital religion and the support of the testimonies of our religious society, were manifested as was truly admirable. Whatever she said of herself, all was in reference to her Heavenly Father, her darling theme being, "The will of the Lord be done, that is what I desire."

During the progress of the disease, though often so distressed with restlessness that it was impossible for her to be still, she uttered many expressions indicating her abiding trust in the everlasting Arm of Divine support. Pretty early in her sickness she remarked that she was very sick; that she did not know how the disease would terminate, but that a few days would show, and that she was content.

For several days in the fore part of her illness she appeared inclined to quiet and deep thoughtfulness. During this season of comparative seclusion, though

under much physical suffering from nervous irritability, she was wonderfully preserved, not only in patience and resignation to the Divine will, but in thankfulness also, which she often expressed, frequently repeating the language, "The will of the Lord be done."

She uniformly spoke of herself with great humility and abasedness; and when alluding to her hope of happiness, it was always with subdued language.—There was nothing extatic in her views, very little allusion to *feelings*, and the *brightness* of her prospects; but a living faith in that grace which had been her guide through life, and which she felt to be sufficient for her on the bed of sickness and suffering.

On one occasion, when some beloved friends were sitting by her, without anything being said to lead to the subject, she repeated distinctly those lines of Cowper,

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned;"

adding, "what is done for me is done freely:" and then spoke encouragingly to those friends, to bear their testimony against slavery, by declining the use of articles produced by the unrequited labor of the poor slaves, who are as much the objects of Redeeming love as ourselves. This is a subject respecting which she had long felt concern.

Second day morning 28th of Seventh month. The dear invalid was favored to be rather more free from nervous distress, than was generally the case. She said, "It is a great favor to be thus relieved," adding, "I

trust the Lord will have mercy upon me," and repeating the following lines :

" There is mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought,
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot."

Shortly after she said, " There may be a struggle at last, I don't know, I can't see much, but I have peace and happiness. The will of the Lord be done for ever." Then speaking to a person who was waiting upon her, and for whom she had a great regard, she said, " I hope thou wilt be rewarded for all thy kindness to me." Soon after she said, " I have prayed, for your sakes, as well as my own, that I may have an easy passage when I go hence. But the will of the Lord be done—that is what I desire."

Third day morning—As her husband was sitting by her side, her countenance radiant with heavenly love, she said to him with much sweetness, " Don't be sad, endeavor to be cheerful. Thou wilt be cared for.—We have many kind, good friends."

On one occasion she was told, that the doctor said, he thought her situation even on the bed of sickness, was so happy, that he would be glad to exchange with her, if he could. " Tell him then, to do as I have endeavored to do—strive to enter in at the straight gate—there is no other way to the kingdom," was the emphatic reply.

At another time she spoke of the parable of the vine and the branches, as being beautiful and instructive, repeating much of it, and saying, " Oh, the blessedness of abiding in the vine, that we may bring

forth fruit, and thus become the disciples of Christ." Soon after she repeated the passage, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." "The Lord of all had no house in which to dwell."

First day morning, Eighth mo. 3rd, while a beloved relative was sitting by her side, with a sweet and impressive countenance she said, "There is rest, and peace, and joy, in Heaven: I know nothing of myself; but I feel that it is so: I had hoped to be in the enjoyment of it before this time. But we must have patience—we shall have to wait a little longer." She then spoke of the great goodness and mercy of a kind Providence in bestowing upon *man* so many good things—and every thing so exactly suited to his capacity for enjoyment. "Yes," said she, "there have been many favors extended, even to poor me." Shortly after she said very sweetly, "Our Father which art in Heaven." "Oh, what a favor to be able to call Him our Father, and to feel him truly to be so." At another time, as her husband approached her bed-side, she said, "It is a great comfort to believe that we have four dear children in heaven."

The same evening she had a low sinking turn—such had several times occurred during her illness. She appeared to think at this time, as did others also, that the last struggle was near; and she distinctly uttered the heart-touching words, "Ready—all ready." Reviving again, she submissively said, "We must have patience a little longer. The will of the Lord be done."

At this advanced stage of her disease, her numer-

ous inquiries concerning absent friends, and events that were taking place in the world, showed plainly that an extensive range of thought was passing in her mind. She spoke very affectionately of a Friend then engaged in an arduous and important mission in Africa, desiring that a blessing might attend her labors. With deep concern she inquired whether there was a probability that the war that was then going on in a part of that continent, would soon be ended—saying, “Oh, it is so cruel !” And then expressed in strong terms, her great desire that universal peace might prevail in the world.

Fifth day morning, Eighth month, 7th.—Having passed a wearisome night, she became more easy, and as she was lying comfortably upon the pillow, with a look beautifully serene, she said, “If I could have my wish, how I should love to pass quietly away, as I now lay. But the Lord’s will be done.”

Sixth day to her was one of much suffering. Great nervous irritability rendered it exceedingly difficult to be still, which she regretted. She had declined taking nourishment through the day, until about four o’clock in the afternoon, when she took a little from a glass in her own hands. After this she answered several questions, showing that her recollection was yet clear. About this time she was taken from her bed, to have it made comfortable for the night, which she bore, apparently, as well as usual. On being again replaced in bed, she appeared exceedingly feeble, and after lying a short time entirely still, she was observed to gasp once or twice, and life was extinct. &

Thus was answered her petition, that if consistent

with the Divine will, she might have an easy passage out of time. So easy was her release, as to be like falling asleep without the least distortion of her features, on the 8th of Eighth month, 1851.

Thus passed the venerable and beloved Abigail Mott, from a state of trial and probation on earth, to a state, as we reverently believe, of rest, and peace, and joy, in Heaven—the hope of which had been her solace through life, and her support in the solemn hour of death.

“Here is the patience of the saints ; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”





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